Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF)
Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

Providers can apply for SENIF for children who are aged three and four who are on the Early Support Pathway/known to the Sensory Support Service. Providers are expected to demonstrate that the provision required for the child is significantly beyond high quality inclusive practice.

SENIF should be used in a variety of ways and in conjunction with other funding streams such as the Disability Access Fund (DAF) and Early Years Pupil Premium. SENIF is a contribution towards the needs identified within the request.

Eligible Providers

All early years providers (including Childminders) who are eligible to receive funding for 3 and 4 year olds can apply for SENIF. In the event that early year entitlement is withdrawn, in line with the council’s statutory duty, SENIF will cease.

Criteria

Children must meet the following criteria:

- Aged 3 or 4
- On the Early Support Pathway/known to Sensory Support Service

Process

- Parents/carers must be involved in the decision to request SENIF and written consent must be obtained. Providers should use the Parent Agreement Form and this should be retained by the provider.
- If SENIF is agreed, funding will be allocated in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Children who are Eligible for the Early Years Entitlement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s Eligibility</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extended</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SENIF Guidance and FAQ September 2019
For Children aged 3 who are NOT yet Eligible for the Early Years Entitlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum amount awarded</th>
<th>Payment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A contribution towards <strong>15 hours</strong> a week (maximum) for up to 48 weeks per year</td>
<td>Payment will be made on receipt of the Setting Declaration</td>
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- All SENIF requests are to be completed on the Local Authority’s **SENIF Request Form**.
- Providers must answer the questions accurately and include details of how the funding will be used.
- Providers do not need to send any supporting evidence with the SENIF Request Form. The Early Years SEND Coordinators & colleagues in SEND Services have access to the child’s Early Help Assessment and all recent reports and assessments. If further information is required then the Early Years SEND Coordinator will contact the provider directly.
- The decision making process will be led by the Early Years SEND Coordinators with representatives from SEND Services contributing where appropriate. The decision will be informed by the SENIF Request Form and additional information available from the Early Help Assessment and supporting evidence.
- Not all requests will be successful, however, providers can resubmit their request up to two times. Further guidance will be offered to providers who are resubmitting.
- In most cases funding will be agreed for one term.
- The Local Authority aims to process applications within two weeks from receipt of the request.

**SENIF Review and Monitoring**

- Providers must complete a review form at the end of every term if they wish to request continued funding. Failure to do so may result in the funding ceasing.
- The purpose of the review is to identify the impact of the funding for this child and allow analysis of the impact of SENIF for the cohort of children supported by the fund.
- In addition to the above the Local Authority will audit a random selection of settings in receipt of SENIF which may include a visit and coordination with SEND Services.
**Change of Circumstances**

- If the child leaves a setting or reduces the number of hours that they attend the provider must inform the Local Authority. Providers should do this by sending an e-mail to the Early Years SEND Team: `ey.send@cambridgeshire.gov.uk`

  PLEASE ONLY USE THE CHILD’S INITIALS when sending e-mails to this e-mail address and don’t forget to put the name of your setting.

- If a child increases their hours and the setting would like to request further funding then the provider should send an e-mail to the Early Years SEND Team: `ey.send@cambridgeshire.gov.uk`.

  PLEASE ONLY USE THE CHILD’S INITIALS when sending e-mails to this e-mail address and don’t forget to put the name of your setting.
SENIF Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I apply for SENIF in advance of a child starting?

Yes with parent/carer consent. Please ensure section 8A of the Request Form is completed.

2. Can I apply for SENIF before the child turns 3?

Providers can send in the request prior to the child turning 3 but the funding will only be paid from the child’s 3rd birthday.

3. If a child attends multiple settings does each setting need to apply?

Yes, but please contact the Early Years SEND Team first before submitting a form ey.send@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

4. If a child lives in another county but attends a Cambridgeshire setting can we still apply for SENIF?

Yes the funding is for the setting so you can still apply for SENIF.

5. How do I inform the Local Authority of any changes? (This may include an increase or decrease in hours, changing setting or low attendance)

Please inform the Early Years SEND Team of any changes by sending an e-mail to ey.send@cambridgeshire.gov.uk (Please only use the child’s initials in the e-mail).

6. What if the child’s attendance is low?

Where attendance is low settings may need to consider how best to utilise the funding, for example using the time to create resources. Where children are off for long periods the setting could consider offering the option of home visits if this is something the parents/carers would like. Funding will rarely be effected, but where long term absences occur it is important the setting indicate this and the reasons in the review.
7. Can a child access SENIF if they have deferred entry to school?

Yes this is possible if they meet criteria.

8. My setting has received an Inadequate/Requires Improvement Ofsted Judgement, can I still apply for SENIF?

The funding risk assessment will consider children with SEND. Providers should discuss this with their allocated Improvement Adviser.

9. Can SENIF be backdated?

No, SENIF cannot be backdated.

10. Can I apply for SENIF if a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?

No, SENIF will cease when the final EHCP is in place.

11. Is there any criteria for spending the SENIF?

There is no set criteria as to how SENIF is spent, it is agreed based upon the provision described within the application to ensure the child is fully included within the setting environment. This could include delivering specific interventions, small group work, purchasing relevant resources, obtaining appropriate training and enhanced staffing.

12. How is the SENIF monitored by the Local Authority?

It is important that the Local Authority is confident that SENIF is being used effectively to meet the identified purposes agreed in the application. In most cases termly reviews will provide the Local Authority with the necessary information to monitor SENIF. The Local Authority will also audit some settings which may include a visit and coordination with SEND Services.

For any further advice and support please don’t hesitate to contact the Early Years Service SEND Team – ey.send@cambridgeshire.gov.uk